Government's attention has been drawn to press reports on remarks by the US Secretary of State to the effect that a formula for a moratorium on fissile materials needs to be found in addition to other steps for US sanctions to be lifted. Government's view on unilateral restrictive economic measures have been set out in official statements. India has stated that it would constructively participate in negotiations for a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear exposive devices. India will pay serious attention to any other multilateral initiatives in this area, during the course of the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

Cadre Review in Regional Passport Offices

578. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that there has been no cadre review in the Regional Passport Offices since its inception;

(b) whether any such demand has been raised by the employees for initiating a Cadre review in that organisation; and

(c) if so, what steps have been taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) A detailed proposal for a comprehensive review of the Central Passport Organization cadre is currently under Government's consideration.

Issue of Passports

579. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Embassies are engaged in the issue of passports;

(b) if so, the reasons as to why the specialists in the field *i.e.*, the employees of the Regional Passport Office are not being engaged for the same in the Indian Missions;

(c) whether there is any proposal to engage these specialists for the issue of passports from abroad; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) the deployment of officers belonging to the Central Passport Organisation is governed by the rules of service applicable to their cadre. The officers posted in the Consular Wings of Indian Diplomatic Missions and Posts abroad are competent to discharge duties relating to the issue of passports and visas and provision of other consular services.

Black listing of Indian companies by US

580. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the United States Government has blacklisted 200 companies and organisations both in the public and the private sector as reported widely in the press;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of Government thereon;

(c) in the light of these developments the detailed status of Jaswant Singh—Talbott talks and the chance of any meaingful agreement between the two sides; and

(d) the stand of government on the question of signing the CTBT in view of all these?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) The US Department of Commerce published on 13th November, 1998 a list of Indian entities that will be subject to export restrictions. The list includes 40 Indian